

breaks. As we repair the Medicare program, and attempt to slow its growth, we must do so in the broader context of health care reform to ensure that older Americans—and indeed all Americans—have access to quality, affordable health care.

TOP TEN

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, from the home office in Scottsdale, AZ, the President's top 10 excuses for not offering a credible balanced budget alternative: Ten, pollsters told me not to; nine, don't worry, be happy; eight, the flowers are blooming, the sun is shining—who can think about budgets in the spring; seven, what's a couple trillion dollars between friends?; six, distracted by the start of the baseball season; five, I've fallen and I can't get up; four, contract-fatigue; three, those darn Republicans have taken all the good ideas; two, when the going gets tough, stick your head in the sand.

And the President's No. 1 excuse for not offering his own credible balanced budget alternative: The dog ate my budget.

CALL A CUT A CUT

(Mr. BROWN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether to call this room the Hall of the House or the Casino of the Capitol because right now, the Republicans are playing a billion dollar shell game with Medicare.

The Republicans say they are increasing funding for Medicare over the next 7 years. What they really do is cut the amount needed to maintain the current level of services by \$282 billion. That does not sound like much of an increase to me.

What this really means for the average senior citizen is that they will have to pay more out of their own pocket for health care. In fact, they will have to pay over \$3,500 more out of their own pockets over the next 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Republicans to come clean. They have prided themselves on opening up government and being honest with the American people. If that is true, then they should be honest enough to call a cut a cut.

The American people, especially our senior citizens, will remember this act of dishonesty on November 5, 1996—election day.

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WE MUST ACT NOW ON MEDICARE AND THE BUDGET

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, in the coming months we face two extraordinary battles—the battle to protect the future of our Nation's seniors and the battle to preserve the future of America's children.

We cannot fail in either of these battles. Our opponents will do everything they can to distort what we are trying to do. They will use fear tactics to scare innocent Americans into a false sense of security about the status quo.

The status quo is the enemy. If we do nothing Medicare will be bankrupt in 7 years. What would the Democrats have our seniors do then? By acting now we can save the Medicare system and offer security to our seniors.

If we do nothing about the budget, our children will pay more than \$187,000 over the course of their lives just to pay for interest on the national debt. We must balance the budget now if we want to protect the American dream for our children.

Mr. Speaker, we must stand firm and deliver. The stakes are too high to do nothing.

REPUBLICANS AND MEDICARE

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, to say that the Republicans are saving Medicare is like saying Colonel Sanders is saving the lives of chickens. Republicans are cutting Medicare with their budget today. They are lowering the amount of money available. They know there will not be enough as the population grows of seniors needing Medicare and health care costs go up.

So as they talk about more money for Medicare, sure, they are tossing a 25-foot rope to someone 30-feet offshore drowning. They say that is compassion.

So why are the Republicans cutting Medicare and Social Security in their budget? It is simple. To give tax breaks to wealthy Americans. It is a tax break plan that even 100 Republicans wrote their leadership and said, please do not do this; it is unfair. But Speaker GINGRICH pushed it through, and now with this ironclad discipline, the Republicans will be voting for it today.

I hope America tunes into this debate. What is at stake is not only health care for seniors and their out-of-pocket costs, but for a lot of working families with senior parents and grandparents this debate gets right to your pocketbook.

A HISTORIC DAY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, here we are. This is it. We are on the brink. For the first time since 1969, the U.S. House of Representatives will be passing a balanced budget amendment.

This is a historic moment. This is significant. This is real.

We spend almost \$20 billion each month on the interest alone on the national debt. It is the third largest item, third largest expenditure in our annual budget. In 2 years it will exceed all of military spending. This has got to be brought under control.

As my Democrat friend, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. PETE GEREN, said, who benefits from balancing the budget? Senior citizens, children, students, the disabled. If you want to do something for them, you have got to give them a tomorrow. If you are going to give them a tomorrow, you have to spend your money properly today.

This is not time for partisan rhetoric. This is not time for grandstanding. There are a lot of things you can criticize in this balanced budget amendment, but offer your own. This is the time to do it. This is a crucial crossroads for the United States of America.

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, country and western singer Jerry Reed must have had the Republican budget in mind when he sang, "She got the gold mine and I got the shaft."

The proposed budget which the Congress will vote on today will give the gold mine to wealthy special interests while America's elderly who depend upon Medicare and depend upon Social Security get the shaft.

The Republican budget cuts Medicare by \$283 billion over 7 years, slashing Medicare spending by 25 percent. Out-of-pocket costs for seniors will increase by over \$1,000 in 2002 and \$3,500 over 7 years.

My constituents have not been asking me to raise the cost of their health care to provide tax breaks for the wealthy and to escalate cold war spending. The budget also cuts Medicaid by \$180 billion over 7 years and cuts Social Security benefits by \$24 billion between 1999 and 2002, all to pay for tax cuts for the rich.

Mr. Speaker, why are Republicans cutting Medicare to pay for tax cuts for the privileged few?

FISCAL YEAR 1996 BUDGET

(Mr. LAZIO of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, we are at a point where we are about to make history. We will soon vote on the budget resolution that contains a strong moral message. That message is that the status quo is unacceptable. A \$4.7 trillion debt is unacceptable. Annual deficits close to \$200